



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2004
Media Contact: Ken Miller
Phone: 858.694.2951

COUNTY BOARD APPROVES WILDFIRE FUNDS ***Allocates \$5 Million For Fire Safety And Fuels Reduction Program***

San Diego County's Board of Supervisors today took a major step in reducing wildfire risks in unincorporated areas when it allocated \$5 million to supplement other grants of nearly \$40 million for the Fire Safety and Fuels Reduction Program (FSFRP).

That program assesses fire threats and hazards on a community basis and prioritizes tree and vegetation removal areas while protecting sensitive habitats and water quality. It also includes flood protection and soil stabilization by installing erosion control measures. In addition, it helps reestablish native vegetation and reduces invasive species growth.

"Two-thirds of the County did not burn in the October Fires and many communities still face extreme fire danger," said Chairwoman Dianne Jacob. "The County already is trimming back trees along roads that serve as access and evacuation corridors. Today's action will help to significantly ramp up the removal of dead and diseased trees."

Prolonged drought and widespread destructive insect infestations have resulted in dangerously high tree mortality in many areas of the County. Dead, dying and diseased trees and other vegetation along vast stretches of burned chaparral remain a ready source of fuel easily ignited during dry and windy weather.

Three areas are already marked as high risk—Palomar Mountain, the Julian area and Lost Valley. There are a total of 72 communities at risk in the County.

Impacted areas include road rights of way, public lands, private property and high-risk subdivisions adjacent to public lands. Over the next several weeks, property owners in these areas will receive a letter outlining the program and a form to submit to the County to participate. The County set up a toll free telephone hotline for residents to call for more information: 1- (866) 402.6044.

FSFRP is a cooperative effort of the County, federal, state and local agencies.

###